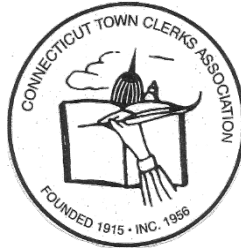


# Connecticut Town Clerks Association, Inc.

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## WRITTEN TESTIMONY of

Anna Posniak, Co-Chair Legislative Committee  
Connecticut Town Clerks Association

### **HB 5262, An Act Revising Certain Absentee Voting Eligibility Statutes** **SB 184, An Act Extending Through November 8, 2022, Several Changes Regarding Election** **Administration as a Result of Covid-19 and Concerning Eligibility to Vote by Absentee Ballot**

Government Administration and Elections Committee  
Friday, March 4, 2022

Good afternoon Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, Senator Sampson, Representative Mastrofrancesco, and the distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee my name is Anna Posniak, Windsor Town Clerk and Co-Chair of the Legislative Committee for Connecticut Town Clerks Association (CTCA).

The members of the CTCA are entrusted with numerous election related responsibilities, including issuing absentee ballots. Our role is vital to ensuring the integrity, fairness, and transparency of Connecticut's elections.

The CTCA is supportive of **HB 5262 An Act Revising Certain Absentee Voting Eligibility Statutes**. The bill seeks to align with language in the Constitution regarding eligibility for voting by absentee ballot. CTCA has in the past expressed concerns for caregivers who were excluded from these eligibility requirements and we believe the language in this bill would provide them with an option to vote by absentee ballot. Additionally, the bill provides greater latitude for those voters who have a long commute to work to vote by absentee ballot.

### **SB 184 An Act Extending Through November 8, 2022, Several Changes Regarding Election** **Administration as a Result of Covid-19 and Concerning Eligibility to Vote by Absentee Ballot**

While the CTCA understands the reasons and intentions for providing Connecticut voters the ability to request an absentee ballot for reason of COVID, we wish to highlight issues based on past experience with administering an unprecedented amount of absentee ballot requests.

With the 2020 Presidential Election, in the height of global pandemic town clerks successfully issued over 665,000 absentee ballots. Our ability to successfully administer the absentee ballot process was largely due to federal and private grant funds. Additionally, at that time, many town halls were closed to the public, giving town clerks the ability to utilize unused meeting rooms to process the large number of

absentee ballot applications and prepare ballot sets for mailing to the voter. Vaults used to safely store the voted ballots were closed to the public. Town clerks had access to a larger pool of part-time employees and volunteers to assist with processing the applications as people found themselves either underemployed, unemployed or working remotely. Today, cities and towns are struggling with filling jobs much like employers in the private sector. With town halls fully open to the public now, the much-needed funds, staff and physical office space will present a serious dilemma for cities and towns as they administer the expansion of absentee voting for the Gubernatorial Election.

In 2020, our state experienced a very low rejection rate of absentee ballots largely due to the media attention and intense advertising and social media efforts by the Secretary of the State and Town Clerks. Voters were regularly viewing paid commercials, social media content and local media stories providing tutorials on how to successfully vote an absentee ballot. Without the paid commercials and media attention, the possibility for higher rejections rates may increase.

At a time when voters are energized and motivated to vote, we need to ensure that any effort to issue an exceptionally high volume of absentee ballots is fully funded to prevent voter apathy and frustrations. If left as an unfunded mandate to municipalities, we may see disparities in funding from one town to next. All election officials across the state need equitable funds and resources to successfully administer the upcoming elections.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.